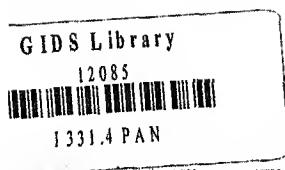


Women Khadi Workers : A Study of Economic Conditions and Status of Women Spinners in Uttar Pradesh

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper forms a part of the study on Role of Public Specialised Agencies as Instruments of Womens'Equality and Development organised by the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi. We are grateful to CWDS for asking us to participate in the study and making requisite funds available for it.

The major responsibility for organising the study was undertaken by my colleague Dr P N Pande who was ably assisted by Shri G S Mehta and Shri D K Bajpai. I am happy to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation from these colleagues.

June 1985.

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WOMEN KHADI WORKERS : A STUDY OF ECONOMIC
CONDITIONS AND STATUS OF WOMEN SPINNERS IN U.P

I INTRODUCTION

Agriculture holds overwhelming importance as the source of employment, income and livelihood of people in rural India. Yet often it fails to meet these requirements adequately due primarily to predominantly seasonal nature of agricultural activity and small size of landholdings with most of the cultivating households. Inevitably, therefore, non-agricultural activities assume significance as supplementary and often, main, source of employment and income. Around 20 per cent of the rural household, in fact, have an activity other than agriculture, as their main activity and another 30 per cent depend on non-agricultural activities as secondary occupation. Textile-based activity, spinning and weaving and making of textile products has traditionally been one of the most important and widely prevalent, occupation of rural workers. And within this category, the officially sponsored programme of spinning and weaving of khadi, has assumed particular importance especially in the post-Independence period.

Textile-based activity, particularly within the officially sponsored khadi programme, is found to be highly suitable as an avenue of employment and earnings for women in the rural areas, as it enables them to work and earn at home; can be combined with other productive and household work; can be

resumed and discontinued at convenience without any loss of material, and under the arrangements made by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and Gandhi Ashrams, raw material supplies and delivery of completed output is effected locally without involving long distance travel and absence from home for a long time. Participation of women in these activities is, therefore, high; and it is expected that besides contributing to the household income, this work also brings an improvement in the status of women in so far it provides them opportunity to earn an income distinctly attributable to their efforts, unlike in the household activities like agriculture.

The present study seeks to examine some aspects of women's participation in khadi activities. Besides looking at the extent of participation and involvement of women in khadi work, attempt is also made to relate this work with the household situation particularly in terms of economic contribution by women through this activity, time-use pattern and combination and conflict of khadi work with other productive work and household chores. Any problem that the women workers face in the performance of khadi work both with respect of their families and khadi organisation are also sought to be highlighted. And attempt is also made to examine whether and to what extent this work and income derived from it improves the position of women in the household and the community.

It is wellknown that khadi and village industries, in the promotion of which KVIC has been engaged for past over three, decades, constitute a very significant part of rural non-agricultural activities in India particularly in terms of the number of persons engaged in them. During 1982-83, 11.44 lakh persons were reported to be employed on a full time and another 22.90 lakhs on a part-time basis in the activities covered by KVIC.¹ Out of this, khadi alone employed 6.44 lakh persons in a full time and 13.79 persons on a part-time basis. Of the total workers engaged in khadi and village industries almost one half are women. But the percentage of women is much higher in khadi at 74 per cent; and within khadi around 88 per cent workers are engaged in spinning.²

In Uttar Pradesh, there were over 4.48 lakh workers engaged in khadi during 1981-82 of which 89 per cent were in spinning alone. We have, therefore, confined the detailed investigation for the purpose of the present study to women spinners.³

Detailed investigation for data collection for the study was undertaken among a sample of 188 women from three different areas in the State of Uttar Pradesh : 62 from hill district of Almora, 60 from Muzaffarnagar, a district in Western Uttar Pradesh and 66 from Ballia, a district in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The three districts were selected on the principles of varied socio-economic situations in different parts of the

1 Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Annual Report, 1982-83, Bombay 1984.

2 Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Annual Report, 1981-82, Bombay 1983.

3 Ibid.

State, on the one hand; and concentration of khadi activity among districts in a region, on the other. The principle of concentration was further followed in the next stage of selection of blocks and villages in the selected districts, and a complete census of women spinners was then taken in a few villages selected on the above basis. The survey, conducted during December 1984-January 1985 used a structured questionnaire in Hindi and sought information on the various aspects of the work and life of women spinners, particularly relating to the importance of khadi and especially spinning as an activity for the household and the women spinners, volume of spinning work and earnings, process and problems of spinning work by women both in relation to the agency giving them work and the family, coordination and conflict of spinning work with other household activities, and impact of spinning work on the independence and status of the women spinners.

II ECONOMY AND SPINNING ACTIVITY : CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREE SAMPLE AREA

The three districts in which we conducted the survey for our study, though very similar in terms of broad occupational characteristics in so far as in each of them between 80 to 85 per cent of rural workers were engaged in agriculture, differed in certain other aspects. Almora with the largest geographical area, had the smallest population due to the hilly terrain. Ballia and Muzaffarnagar on the other hand, smaller geographical areas, but much large population. Density of population in

the three districts, therefore, differed significantly: 141 persons per sq. km. in Almora, 545 persons per sq.km. in Muzaffarnagar and 610 persons per sq.km in Ballia. Household industry and manufacturing accounted for a small proportion of workers in each district 1.37 per cent in Almora, 3.75 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 2.49 per cent in Ballia. The number of spinners in the three districts, according to the KVIC sources, was 5908 in Almora, 17738 in Muzaffarnagar and 32000 in Ballia during 1982-83.

Some broad differences in the pattern of spinning activity among the three districts may be noted before we go into the detailed account of the data collected from the sample of spinners. First, spinning in Almora district is confined to wool; in Muzaffarnagar, spinning of both cotton and wool is undertaken, while in Ballia only cotton is spun. Second, the tradition of spinning of wool is century-old in Almora, where the necessity of woollen cloth combines with the trade with Tibet sustained this activity for a long time mainly in the hands of the Bhotia tribe and later on it also spread to other groups mainly as a result of the khadi movement in the pre-Independence period. In muzaffarnagar and Ballia, the tradition is more recent in that order. Third, technologically, spinning is carried out mainly with takli (drop spindle) in Almora, with old charkha in Muzaffarnagar, but in

Ballia old charkha, Ambar Charkha and New Model Charkha (NMC) seem to be equally popular. Takli spinning is virtually non-existent in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia. Fourth, all spinning in Almora is done by spinners at home; the system of spinning in workshops is prevalent to a significant extent both in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia.

These differences among the districts broadly correspond to the importance that spinning as an activity has in the household employment and income structure. It is seen that in Almora, spinning assumes the status of a spare ^{time} / activity to mainly earn 'pocket money' while in other districts it is an economic proposition. Particularly amongst women, who constitute the majority of spinners, this differentiation is very significant also because the participation of women in other productive and household work is much higher in Almora than in the other two districts.

III SPINNERS' HOUSEHOLD AND SPINNING ACTIVITY

The families of the 188 sample spinners had a total population of 1056 persons : the average size of the family being 5.61 in aggregate, 5.03 in Almora, 6.22 in Muzaffarnagar and 5.62 in Billia (Table 1). The proportion of persons engaged in any productive activity, in whatsoever marginal way was as high as

TABLE 1 : FAMILY SIZE AND ACTIVITY STATUS OF HOUSEHOLD
MEMBERS OF SPINNERS

District	Number of househol- ds (No. of sample spinners	Total Popu- lati- on of house- holds	Ave- rage fam- ily size	Family Size				Activity Status								
				Children		Student		Housewife	Unemployed	Working	Retired					
				N	%	N	%					N	%	N	%	
ALMORA	:	62	312	5.03	37	11.86	47	15.06	3	0.97	2	0.64	215	68.91	8	2.56
MUZAFFARNAGAR	:	60	373	6.22	58	15.55	61	16.35	64	17.16	5	1.34	185	49.60	-	--
BALLIA	:	66	371	5.65	21	5.66	116	31.27	34	9.16	3	0.81	197	53.10	-	--
TOTAL	:	188	1056	5.62	116	10.98	224	21.12	101	9.66	10	0.95	597	56.53	8	0.76

69 per cent in Almora, 50 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 53 per cent in Ballia, overall proportion being 57 per cent. It is significant to note that on this criterion, the non-worker-housewives contributed a negligible proportion of population in Almora, 17 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 9 per cent in Ballia. Children of school going age seem to be working part-time in productive activity in Almora and Muzaffarnagar to a much larger extent than in Ballia so that the 'students' make 15 per cent of 16 per cent of population in the former two districts, but 31 per cent in Ballia.

Spinning is undertaken by around 39 per cent of the working population of the household of sample spinners, by 17 per cent as primary and by 22 per cent as secondary activity, the district-wise percentage being 49 in Almora, 16 in Muzaffarnagar and 18 in Ballia (Table 2). But only around five per cent of spinners in Almora undertook spinning as their main activity, the proportion of such spinners was 82 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 73 per cent in Ballia. Spinning, however, constituted an important activity of the households, second only to agriculture in which the percentage of working family members engaged was 94 in Almora, 56 in Muzaffarnagar and 59 in Ballia, mostly carrying it out as their primary activity.

TABLE 2 : OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF WORKERS OF SPINNERS' HOUSEHOLD AND PARTICIPATION IN SPINNING AND OTHER KHADI WORK.

OCCUPATION	No. of Workers Carrying out Occupations							
	Almora		Muzaffarnagar		Ballia		Total	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Cultivation	200	3	93	10	116	-	409	13
Agricultural labour	--	--	14	2	9	-	23	2
Artisan	4	6	-	-	4	4	8	10
Non-agricultural labour	--	11	16	3	4	6	20	20
Trade and Commerce	--	--	5	1	10	2	15	3
Service	2	1	8	3	3	6	11	9
Animal Husbandry	1	4	-	10	-	38	1	52
Spinning: Male	4	40	-	-	-	-	4	40
Female	1	61	49	11	48	18	98	90
Total	5	101	49	11	48	18	102	130
Weaving and other khadi work:								
Male	3	16	-	-	-	-	3	16
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3	16	-	-	-	-	3	16
TOTAL	215	43	185	40	197	75	597	158

(1) As Primary Activity: (2) As Secondary Activity.

Differential participation in spinning work among districts is to a large extent a reflection of the inter-district differences in landholding pattern. Only one of the 62 spinners in Almora belonged to landless household, while the percentage of such spinners was 33 and 21 in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia (Table 3). Among the landed, the landholding distribution was, however, more tilted in favour of larger size in the latter two districts, 82 per cent of the households had a landholding of less than two acres in Almora, households with such landholding size constituted 10 and 13 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia. Households with a landholding size of three acres or more accounted

TABLE 3 : DISTRIBUTION OF SPINNERS' HOUSEHOLD BY LANDHOLDINGS:

Landholding size(Acres)	Almora	Muzaffarnagar	Ballia	Total
Landless	1 (1.61)	20 (33.33)	14 (21.21)	35 (18.62)
Less than 1.00	24 (38.72)	1 (1.67)	3 (4.55)	28 (14.89)
1.00-1.99	27 (43.55)	5 (8.33)	10 (15.15)	42 (22.35)
2.00-2.99	7 (11.29)	12 (20.00)	20 (30.30)	39 (20.74)
3.00-4.99	2 (3. 22)	13 (21.67)	13 (19.70)	28 (14.89)
5.00-9.99	1 (1.61)	7 (11.67)	4 (6 .06)	12 (6.38)
10.00 and above	---	2 (3.33)	2 (3. 33)	4 (2.13)
TOTAL:::	62 (100)	60 (100)	66 (100)	188 (100)

Note: Figures in brackets are percentages to the sample.

for five per cent in Almora, 37 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 26 per cent in Ballia. In the aggregate, spinning activity is found to be popular to a more or less similar extent among the households with different sizes of landholdings but due to different pattern of distribution of rural households between landless and the landholders, and of landholders among different size groups, the degree of importance of spinning in household activity differs among the three districts. In Almora, landless constitute a small group, therefore, most spinners take up spinning as a spare-time activity, but since most households have a small landholdings, participation in spinning is high. In the other two districts, landless population is significantly large, and they take up spinning as their primary activity, but the sizeable number of large holders engage in spinning to a smaller extent and therefore, overall participation by workers in this activity is low in these districts.

It is interesting to note that spinning is the only activity connected with khadi that is carried out by members of households of sample spinners in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia, and also, only women are engaged in spinning in these areas, but in Almora weaving and allied activities in khadi are also carried out by a sizeable number of persons, though only males, and spinning is carried out both by males and females. In the households of the sample spinners in Almora, on an average two persons were engaged in khadi work, 35 per cent of them were male spinners, 50 per cent female spinners and 15 per cent male weavers and allied workers. In the two other areas only one person per household was found engaged in khadi work, all of them were women and engaged in spinning only.

On a comparative scale, the households of the women spinners are not necessarily among the poorest. In terms of living conditions, it is noted that about 90 per cent of the spinners lived in pucca houses, the incidence of kutchra houses was somewhat larger (48%) in Muzaffarnagar. In the other two areas partially all the spinners in the sample had pucca houses. As mentioned earlier, they belong to households with all landholding sizes as well as to the landless, and, it is seen that, their proportions also do not differ significantly among the different groups of household income and expenditure. Only one spinner in Muzaffarnagar belonged to a household with less than Rs.1500 as its annual income. Around

15 per cent of spinners belong to households with an annual income of over Rs.10,000; 48 per cent of households with an income level of Rs.7,000; another 29 per cent had a household income of between Rs.4,500 and 7,000. The average per capita income of the households of the sample spinners estimated to Rs.1,495 in Almora, Rs.1,348 in Muzaffarnagar and Rs.1,250 in Ballia. The corresponding figures of per capita annual expenditure were Rs.1,269, Rs.764 and Rs.960 respectively, thus reflecting a situation with reasonably high per capita income level in the context of the overall situation in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and also a surplus of income over expenditure, on an average. Thus, spinning is not necessarily an activity carried out by the poorest only for their subsistence. No doubt some of the households in which women have taken up spinning work are landless and otherwise poor, and their per capita income levels are too low to meet the household expenditure. Twenty one per cent households in Almora, 18 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 26 per cent in Ballia had a household income of less than Rs.4,500, which can be considered to be the poverty line income in 1984 to which these figures related. It is presumed that most of these households were not able to meet their essential expenditure and had to borrow for their subsistence. Borrowing is not, however, confined to these households : 43 per cent of the households had borrowed; 19 per cent of those in Almora, at an average of Rs.1,742.35 per cent of those in Muzaffarnagar at an average of Rs.4,726 and 71 per cent in Ballia at an average of Rs.932. But only

TABLE 4 : HOUSEHOLD INCOMES, PER CAPITA INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
AND CONTRIBUTION OF SPINNING

Annual House- hold Income Range (Rs.)	Percentage of Households			
	Almora	Muzaffarnagar	Ballia	Total
Less than 3000	1.61	5.00	9.09	5.32
3000 to 4499	19.35	15.00	16.67	17.02
4500 to 6999	33.87	41.67	13.64	29.25
7000 to 9999	30.65	18.33	50.00	33.51
10000 and above	14.52	20.00	10.61	14.89
% contribution of spinning to household income	5.10	12.03	14.47	10.56
Per Capita Income (Rs)	1495	1348	1250	1362
Per Capita Expenditure (Rs)	1269	764	960	999
% Households Indebted	19.35	36.67	71.21	43.09
Average debt per borrowing household (Rs)	1742	4726	932	2082
Purpose for which borrowed (% of borrowing households)				
1.Current consumption	33.33	22.73	12.77	18.53
2.Production & Trade	16.66	50.00	70.21	56.79
3.Property repair or purchase	25.00	9.09	10.64	12.34
4.Social Ceremonies	25.00	18.18	6.38	12.34

18 per cent of the borrowing household borrowed to meet current consumption needs. Those indebted for the purposes of consumption constituted six per cent of the total sample households in Almora, 8 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 9 per cent in Ballia. It seems that most households with low income

adjusted their consumption expenditure rather than borrow. But the largest number of borrowing households (48%) borrowed for purposes of agriculture and animal husbandry, and most often in Ballia, followed by Muzaffarnagar and rarely in Almora.

That spinning is mainly a spare time activity in Almora, while it is of significant economic importance in the other two districts is revealed by the proportion of incomes of the households of spinners, derived from this work. In Almora, spinning contributed around five per cent of household income, in Muzaffarnagar 12 per cent and in Ballia 14.50 per cent, the overall percentage being 10.56. It is seen that income yielded per unit of worktime is somewhat lower in spinning than in other activities. Taking the percentage of household worker engaged in spinning and percentage of total worktime (including that spent on household chores) devoted to spinning, the proportion of worktime of the household spent in spinning estimates to 11.4 per cent. It is 8.7 per cent in Almora, 11.67 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 12.9 per cent in Ballia which suggests that in Ballia spinning is more productive than other activities, in Muzaffarnagar it is equally productive but in Almora it is far less productive. If time spent on 'non-productive' activities is excluded from worktime, the productivity estimates of spinning will get reduced by one-third.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS, ACTIVITIES AND STATUS OF WOMEN SPINNERS

Women spinners belong to all the age groups. Around 10 per cent of them were below 15 years of age, the percentage of these young spinners was rather high at 18 in Ballia and very low at 1.6 per cent in Almora (Table 5). Those above 60 years of age constituted seven per cent, equally distributed between Almora and Muzaffarnagar. About 22 per cent were in the age group 16-25 years. The age pattern of spinners did not vary much differ among the three districts except in respect of the very

TABLE 5 : AGE AND MARITAL STATUS OF SPINNERS

Age Group (Years)	Marital Status											
	Almora				Muzaffarnagar				Ballia			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
0-15	1	-	-	1	6	-	-	6	10	2	-	12
16-25	3	5	6	14	17	5	-	22	-	16	-	16
26-35	-	10	2	12	-	8	-	8	-	11	-	11
36-59	-	28	-	28	-	12	5	17	-	27	-	27
60 and above:	-	7	-	7	-	4	3	7	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	4	50	8	62	23	29	8	60	10	56	-	66

(1)Never Married;(2)Married;(3)Widow;(4)Total.

young and the very old as mentioned above. Though those aged below 15 years were only 10 per cent, the 'never married' category made about 20 per cent. This is because a large majority of those in the age group 16-25 years in Muzaffarnagar were unmarried. Widows constituted 8.5 per cent of the sample, equally distributed, like those above 60 years of age, between Almora and Muzaffarnagar. Overall, 72 per cent of the sample

spinners were married, the percentage being 83 in Almora, 48 in Muzaffarnagar and 85 in Ballia. In Ballia two spinners below the age of 15 were also found to be married.

With a generally low level of literacy, in rural Uttar Pradesh, it is natural that an overwhelming majority (84%) of women spinners were illiterate. Among the literates 65 per cent had schooling upto primary level, 29 per cent upto junior high school and only 6 per cent had gone upto the high school. Illiteracy was the highest in Almora with only two out of 62 spinners being literate and that too with schooling limited to the primary level only. Position in Muzaffarnagar was somewhat better with around 17 per cent spinners literate, mostly with primary level of schooling. Ballia with 29 per cent of the women spinners literate was far better than the average, and it is also significant to note that almost one-half of the literate spinners had gone beyond the primary school and one-tenth had gone upto the high school.

Most spinners had males as the heads of their households. In the eight per cent households with female head the sample spinners them-selves occupied that position (Table 6). In Ballia, no female spinner headed the household, in the other two districts most widows found themselves in that position. Though 72 per cent of the spinners were married, husbands were

heads of the households in 49 per cent cases only. Father-in-law was the head in two cases only in the entire sample. It seems that the joint family is fast giving way to the nuclear one. What is intriguing, however, is that the 'father' was the head of the household in as many as 37 per cent of the sample. It seems that a sizeable proportion of the married spinners are not living with their husbands but with their parents, probably because the marriages have not worked out smoothly. It is also significant to note that 72 per cent of the spinners were married, with living husbands, and of them 76 per cent were in the age group 26-59, yet only 33 per cent of the spinners in the sample had any children. These features somehow suggest that spinning activity is carried out more often by unmarried girls, married women not living with their husbands and those without any children.

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Are there any restrictions from the families, particularly those of the husbands on undertaking spinning work? It is seen that most spinners took the decision of taking up spinning work themselves. (Table 7). The proportion of such spinners was 92 per cent in Almora, 58 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 70 per cent in Ballia. Other family members advised them to take up spinning in eight per cent cases in Almora, 37 per cent cases in Muzaffarnagar and 30 per cent cases in Ballia.

TABLE 7 : TRADITION OF SPINNING AND FAMILY MEMBERS ROLE
IN WOMEN SPINNERS UNDERTAKING SPINNING WORK

	Almora	Muzaffarnagar	Ballia	Total
% of spinners households with spinning as activity of earlier generation also	88.71	55.00	12.12	51.06
% of spinners having decided* to undertake spinning on their own	91.94	58.33	69.67	73.40
% of spinners granted permission* readily by the family	96.77	88.33	78.79	86.77
% of spinners whose family members find spinning conflicting with other activities	3.22	28.33	39.39	23.93
% of cases where any conflict arose due to spinning work	3.22	8.33	12.12	7.98

*Note: It may be noted that in 7.98 per cent cases where the respondent spinner was herself the head of the household - in 9.68 per cent cases in Almora, in 15 per cent cases in Muzaffarnagar and in no case in Ballia - decision had to be her own and no permission from any other family member was required.

Taking up of spinning work may not have met with any resistance or required any fresh thinking in the case of 51 per cent of spinners whose families were carrying out this work from earlier generation. The proportion of the second and third generation spinners was 89 per cent in Almora, 55 per cent in Muzaffarnagar but only 12 per cent in Ballia. In fact, most of the spinners in Ballia received some training before starting spinning work; those undergoing training constituted around one-fourth in Muzaffarnagar, but only one-tenth in

Almora. These difference reflect both the traditon and newness of activity as well as the technology - takli, old charkha or new model charkha - used in the three districts.

Even though the decision to take up spinning was that of the spinners themselves in most cases, permission of the head of the household was taken invariably. However, in most cases, the permission was readily granted. In 15 cases, six in Almora and nine in Muzaffarnagar, the spinners were themselves the head of the households. In 92 per cent of the rest of the cases, permission was granted readily by the head. The proportion of cases where permission was not easily given to women spinners was the highest (21 per cent) in Ballia; followed by Muzaffarnagar (14%) and very small (around 4%) in Almora. The women ~~spinners~~ reported that the other members of the family often think that other necessary household work suffers due to their taking up spinning activity. Overall, 24 per cent of the spinners felt that their family members have such an attitude: in Ballia the proportion of such cases was the highest (39%), followed by Muzaffarnagar (28%) but in Almora in 97 per cent cases the family members did not think that due to spinning other work suffers. There were, however, only a few cases when any actual situation of conflict with other family members arose due to the respondents having taken up spinning work. Only eight per cent respondent reported such a situation : 12 per cent in Ballia, 8 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and three per cent in Almora.

Most respondent women spinners feel that spinning can be carried out along with certain household activities and need not lead to any conflict with and loss of other work. It, however, seems that while spinning, particularly with the help of drop spindle, can well be done along with child-care, looking after animal herds, and also household chores, but it is difficult to combine it with productive activities like agriculture or even with social activities. Possibility of combining spinning with other activities would depend on the technology used, organisation of spinning work and hours spent in spinning activity or, in other words, the magnitude of spinning work undertaken by women spinners. In Almora, little conflict is visualised as technology used (takli) can be carried anywhere and spinning on takli can be undertaken along with any other activity which does not required direct use of hands. In other districts the equipment used, charkha, cannot be taken out for spinning along with animal grazing or attending social ceremonies. Further, working in the workshed cannot be combines with any other work at home.

On an average a women spinner uses 4.57 hours for spinning work : the average is 2.51 hours in Almora, 5.20 hours in Muzaffarnagar and 6.40 hours in Ballia (Table 8). over 50 per cent of them spend over five hours a day in spinning work, but most spinners in Almora devote less than three

hours to this work. Of course, there are seasonal variations in the hours devoted to spinning : October to December being the peak months and July to October lean months in all the three areas surveyed. During the average months various productive activities, including spinning and household work

TABLE 8 : DISTRIBUTION OF SPINNERS BY HOURS OF SPINNING PER DAY AND WORK TIME DISPOSITION AMONG DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES

Spinning Hours Per Day	% of Spinners			
	Almora	Muzaffarnagar	Ballia	Total
Less than 1 hour	6.45	--	--	2.12
1 - 1.50 hours	22.58	--	--	7.45
1.50 - 2 hours	16.13	3.33	--	6.38
2 - 3 hours	30.64	1.67	4.55	12.23
3 - 5 hours	20.97	23.33	19.70	21.28
5 - 8 hours	3.23	63.33	59.09	42.03
8 hours & above	--	8.33	16.66	8.51
	100	100	100	100
Average time spent on				
Spinning :	2.51	5.20	6.40	4.57
Agriculture	4.12	1.05	1.35	2.17
Animal Husbandry	4.28	1.05	2.00	2.58
Other Productive activities	0.61	--	0.55	0.39
Child care	1.10	2.50	0.72	1.55
Cooking & other house work	1.55	3.80	2.90	2.77
Social functions	0.15	--	0.40	0.18
Education of the self	--	0.05	0.21	0.09
Total working hours	15.52	14.45	16.58	16.20

together took about 16 hours of a women spinner's day. In Almora, agriculture and animal husbandry accounted for over half the total work time of 15.52 hours, spinning was the third most important activity taking about one-sixth of the

total work time. Childcare and cooking came next. In Muzaffarnagar, spinning claimed most, 36 per cent of the total work time of 14.50 hours of a woman spinner. Childcare and cooking each took about ~~one-sixth~~ of theal time, animal husbandry and agriculture together another 15 per cent and household work around seven per cent. In Ballia, also spinning claimed the single largest chunk, 39 per cent, of the total work time of 16.58 hours; animal husbandry and agriculture together another 20 per cent, and cooking and other household work 11 per cent.

It seems that even where spinning is undertaken by women as an economic proposition and a significant share of their time is claimed by this activity, it does not necessarily mean that they would have less of the burden of household chores. In every case, the women's working time seems to get stretched to the limits of physical strength. On an average they work for over 16 hours. In Ballia where many of the women spinners take up spinning as an earning proposition and on an average devote six and a half hours per day to it, also perform other productive and household tasks for another over 10 hours. In Muzaffarnagar the situation is somewhat better in so far as after devoting over five hours to spinning, a woman spends another over nine hours in rest of the activities. In Almora, a woman is engaged for thirteen hours a day in household productive and other work; in addition she undertakes spinning work for another two and half hours. Thus spinning even when undertaken in a substantial way,

does not seem to relieve women from other work it only leads to longer stretch of work in general. If in Ballia spinning is undertaken by a woman for one hour more than in Muzaffarnagar, her total work time is also higher by an hour. Thus spinning does not seem to lead to change in the occupational status of women, who continue to remain housewives and unpaid family worker in the family vocation irrespective of the magnitude of spinning they undertake and income they earn from it.

It is, however, redeeming to note that the spinner women have a fair degree of control over the money they earn from spinning (Table 9). Around two-thirds of the spinners in our sample reported that they retain the money they earn : the percentage of spinners who had such freedom was 84 in Almora, 65 in Muzaffarnagar, and 45 in Ballia. There is a relationship with age of spinners with their control over the earnings : only around 37 per cent of those below 15 years of age kept the earning themselves, but percentage of such spinners among those above 60 years of age was 79. Difference in age structure accounts for inter-district differences to some extent, but it seems to arise mainly from the relative importance that spinning as an activity has in the employment and levels of the household. In Almora, importance of spinning in the household is marginal and for

TABLE 9 : PATTERN OF CONTROL OF SPINNERS' EARNINGS

% of Spinners									
Earnings retained by spinner	Earnings kept by						Expenditure of earnings decided by		
	Father	Mother	Husband and	Father-in-law	Mother-in-law	Spinner herself	Others in consultation with spinner	Others w/o consultation of spinner	
Almora	83.87	-	-	11.29	3.23	1.61	83.87	9.68	6.45
Muzaffarnagar	68.33	10.00	6.66	11.67	3.33	-	65.00	25.00	10.00
Ballia	45.45	39.39	-	15.15	-	-	45.45	43.94	10.61
Total	65.43	17.02	2.13	12.77	2.13	0.53	64.36	29.60	9.04

most spinners it is a spare time activity; the situation in Muzaffarnagar is mid-way between, its importance is greater than in Almora, a large proportion of spinners are taking it as their main activity, and contribution of spinning to family income is around 12 per cent as compared to five per cent in Almora. In Ballia, importance of spinning is the highest with 14.50 per cent of household income being derived from it. The pattern also reflects the cultural differences in terms of the women's position in the household. In Almora, the participation of women in work out of home is the highest, followed by Muzaffarnagar and least in Ballia. In most cases, where the earnings from spinning are not retained by the spinner, the person taking charge of

them is a male : in 16 per cent cases the father and in another 13 per cent cases the husband.

Women spinners who keep the earnings themselves are also free to spend it. In most other cases also, the earning spinner is consulted by the keeper of the earnings while deciding to spend it. It is only in nine per cent cases that the women spinners are not consulted on the use of their earnings; and, other members of the household, mostly, males, take the decision. The percentage of such cases is six in Almora, 10 in Muzaffarnagar and 11 in Ballia.

Do the women spinners feel that their status in the family has improved as a result of their participation in spinning? The responses in the three districts follow the pattern of importance of spinning in household income. In Almora 55 per cent spinners do not find improvement in their status, while in Muzaffarnagar two-thirds and in Ballia 82 per cent of them saw such an improvement due to their earning through spinning (Table 10). Similar pattern is observed in respect of their status in the society, except that in Muzaffarnagar status in the family is seen to improve but not necessarily the status in the society. Though two-thirds of the women spinners found their status improved in the family, those who thought they also have an improved status in society constitute only 40 per cent of the Muzaffarnagar sample. In

TABLE 10 : SPINNERS' ASSESSMENT OF IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR STATUS
DUE TO SPINNING

DISTRICT:	(% of Spinners)					
	Improvement of Status in Family.			Improvement of Status in Society		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No.	Total
ALMORA	45.16	54.84	100	33.87	66.13	100
MUZAFFARNAGAR	66.67	33.33	100	40.00	60.00	100
BALLIA	81.82	18.18	100	66.67	33.33	100
TOTAL	64.89	35.11	100	47.34	52.66	100

Almora only one-third but in Ballia two-thirds of them felt that spinning has led to an improvement in their status in the society.

To what extent does participation in spinning lead to greater exposure of women to the world out of the homes and to better awareness and consciousness about the society in general, wage earners and khadi activity, in particular? Of the spinners who need to procure material and deliver spun yarn to the centre, only 35 per cent visit the centre themselves; in most of the other cases, it is the male members who undertake this task. In most cases, the women spinners do not seem concerned about the various aspects of the activity in so far as 65 per cent of them do not even discuss these matters among themselves. Among the three districts significant difference is, however, noted in this respect. In Almora, only 10 per cent spinners

discuss the problem relating to spinning among themselves, their percentage is 67 and 30 in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia respectively. It was observed that in such discussions, the educated spinners had a greater say than the rest, though spinners of longer standing and those spinning larger quantities also held some importance.

The level of knowledge about certain provisions of law protecting labour was miserably low, probably both because of lack of education and irrelevance of the provisions to the part-time spinners. In Ballia, no spinner knew anything about any of the provisions - relating to minimum wages, weekly holidays, annual leave, accident insurance, maternity leave and working hours. In Almora and Muzaffarnagar over one-third of them were aware of the provision of weekly holiday. Some knew about the provision on annual leave and accident insurance, in Muzaffarnagar and about hours of work in Almora.

Most spinners are involved in khadi not only as workers but also as consumers, though for different reasons, mostly, of economic nature. Practically all of them used khadi cloth. In Ballia and Almora, all and in Muzaffarnagar 88 per cent women spinners used khadi themselves. In the former two districts, the members of the spinners' families also used khadi in practically all the cases, but in Muzaffarnagar, members of families of

only 50 per cent spinners used khadi cloth. Most (80%) users used khadi as they found it cheaper than other kind of cloth; 44 per cent of them also preferred it because of durability and comfort : twenty-one per cent used khadi because they were compelled to do so, as part of their wages or refund of deposit was made in the form of khadi cloth. A small number also felt that it is good to use khadi as it gives them the feeling of nationality (2%) and also because it is associated with the name of Gandhiji (5%). Use due to compulsion was reported in 38 per cent cases in Muzaffarnagar and 24 per cent cases in Ballia; but in no case in Almora.

V TECHNOLOGY AND ORGANISATION OF SPINNING ACTIVITY

Spinning is carried out with the help of takli (drop spindle) or charkhas of which there are quite a few varieties in vogue. Mainly three kinds of charkhas were found in use in the areas studies : traditional, Ambar Charkha and New Model Charkha(NMC). In Almora district the traditional means of spinning takli is still used by most of the spinners. The amount of wool or cotton spun with the help of takli is small and, therefore, those using this mode of spinning are able to earn very low wages. But, spinning with takli can be carried out even while engaged in walking, grazing the cattle, or participating in social and community functions at home or away from home. Gradually, takli is being replaced by Bageshwari charkha. This charkha was invented by one industrious man Shri Jeet Singh Tankaria of Boregaon (Bageshwar). It has a peddle

driven wheel with a spindle to spin the wool and needs continuous sitting. It has a device of twisting the yarn also for warp purpose side by side. The continuous eight hours spinning on this charkha can yield 12 to 20 hanks. It costs around Rs.400. The Appropriate Technology Development Association at Anaskti Ashram, Kausani has modified the Bagesh-wari charkha making some additions and alterations to increase its productivity.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission has introduced a model Make 4 Spindle Charkha which can enable a worker to earn a wage of Rs.8 to Rs.12 a day. It has rather elaborate mechanism and hence operating the charkha needs training, which is imparted at the Spinning Centre which at present are far away from spinners' villages. In an eight hour shift a spinner can spin an average 700 grams of wool but it also needs mill-made slivers of Marino wool. The local wool is under trial for spinning in these charkhas. This charkha has not yet gained popularity in the area.

In Muzaffarnagar district, the traditional charkhas (Sundershan) are being used since the earlier generation of the spinners. The Sundershan charkha can be manufactured by the local artisans with locally available wood. It costs hardly Rs.100 to Rs.130 per charkha and does not need any training for operating. It has been observed that the old charkhas are not

popular among the new generation of young spinners,

In 1956, 4 Spindle Ambar Charkha was introduced named after Am-barnath Ji of Madras who developed it. These charkhas are also used in the district along with the traditional one. It costs about Rs.400 per charkha. These charkhas are owned by households. The Ambar Charkha has 6 times more efficiency than the traditional charkha. But due to financial limitations the poor spinners cannot purchase them. This charkha cannot be manufactured at local level and it has to be imported from outside.

New Model Charkhas are also in use in the district, but only to a limited extent. The NMC has 6 spindles and rather complicated mechanism. It is totally made of metal and costs Rs.1500. At present, no NMC is owned by individual in this district. They are procured by Gandhi Ashram for use in the workshed centres. In Muzaffarnagar district there is one NMC Centre (workshed system) located in Kurthal (a cluster of villages) which is about 40 kms. from the district headquarters. The workshed is established in the middle of the villages and it is easily approachable from each corner of the village cluster. The village cluster has 6000 population with more than 300 spinners. The spinners of the workshed belong to the same village cluster. Majority of them are of age between 14 to 20 years. All the spinners have been given training under the TRYSEM programme. Almost all the spinners are literate with some of them having

completed matriculation. No particular caste bias is found in the spinning activity. The economically better off households do not send their family members to the workshed for spinning purpose. The workshed is thus patronised mainly by the spinners from the middle and lower economic brackets of rural households. At present only cotton is spun in the workshed with an average of 500 grams per spinner per day and the spinners generally work in the Centre for 6 to 8 hours a day. The per day productivity of the spinner is 12 to 16 hanks (wage rate 40 paise per hank) and the earnings of per spinner comes to around Rs.4.80 to Rs.6.40 per day. The Gandhi Ashram realises 10 per cent of their earnings from the spinners as Khadi Amanat and the total collection of the spinners is given back to them in the form of khadi cloth. The spinners get their wages twice in a month and they collect cotton every week.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in the village and spinning seems a spare time occupation. Though the spinners work for 6 to 8 hours in the workshed, yet the activity is a leisure time activity for those belonging to the economically well off families. It is observed that in the workshed those spinners above 20 years of age generally belong to landless and poor families and spinning is their full-time occupation and a source of family income. The spinners from

poorer families are more prone of seasonal fluctuations as they also work in agricultural operations. Economically better off households send their unmarried girls for spinning to earn money for their own personal expenditure and to dispose as they want. Very little seasonal variations in work and earnings are observed in their case because the unmarried girls from well off families do not work in agricultural operations. In some cases, these families take khadi cloths instead of cash for their earnings, particularly during the period when a discount is available to which is added a 5 per cent special discount for spinners. On the other hand, the spinners from poor households prefer to take their wages in cash.

The spinners of New Model Charkhas do not like to spin with the traditional charkhas even they get time in their homes. Though there are 100 New model charkhas in the workshed, at present only 75 charkhas are working properly. At present, NMC of six spindles is not used in the household and because its cost is high, There is a great demand of these charkhas in the worksheds in the district. Due to shortage of funds and space, the Gandhi Ashram is not able to cater the demand of spinners. The spinners of the workshed also experienced difficulties in the perennial supply of raw cotton.

In district Ballia, the traditional charkhas are widely used as a means of spinning. However, the NMCs are also introduced in

some areas of the district. The district has many worksheds in the rural areas yet they are not adequate to cater to the large demand. Spinning is more an economic proposition than spare time activity in Ballia.

As observed earlier, the spinners in three districts were using different means of spinning. Takli the predominant means of spinning in hills : 67.74 per cent of the spinners in Almora district use this means of spinning (Table 11). It is, however, completely absent in the other two districts of our sample. The NMCs were used by 9.67 per cent of the spinners in Almora while in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia they were used by 21.66 per cent and 33 per cent spinners respectively. The traditional charkhas are a means of spinning for majority of spinners in the sample areas of our study and were used by 23 per cent spinners in Almora, by 78 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and by 35 per cent in Ballia. Diffusion of new technology for spinning activity is greater in district Ballia as compared to other districts where the traditional charkhas, Ambar charkhas and NMCs were used by similar proportion of spinners while in Almora takli and in Muzaffarnagar traditional charkha accounted for spinning device of most of the spinners. However, shifts in mode of spinning have been observed in each of the districts. But change from traditional charkhas to NMCs has been faster in Ballia district as

TABLE 11 : MEANS OF SPINNING ADOPTED BY SPINNERS

(Number of Spinners)

DISTRICT	Kisan or old charkha		Ambar cha- rkha		N M C		Takli	Material Spun	
	Own- ed	Rent- ed	Own- ed	Rent- ed	Own- ed	Rent- ed		Wool	Cotton
Almora	14	--	--	--	6	--	42	62	--
Muzaffa- rnagar	47	--	--	--	--	13	--	26	34
Ballia	23	--	21	--	--	22	--	--	66
TOTAL::	84	--	21	--	6	35	42	88	100

compared to other districts. Of the 66 spinners, 22 have changed their means of spinning and adopted NMCs, similarly 17 spinners have adopted Ambar Charkhas in place of traditional charkhas in Ballia district. In Muzaffarnagar district, only 11 spinners have changed their means of spinning and replaced traditional charkha by NMCs. The shift has been limited and confined to only 13 spinners in Almora district where seven spinners changed their means from takli to old charkha and six from takli to NMCs. The shift of means of spinning generally depends on availability of technological devices, finance, importance of spinning in terms of time spent on and household income derived from it, by the spinners.

Change in technology has obviously required that spinners undergo some training particularly when the new equipment has rather complicated mechanism. Training for spinning is required for

Ambar Charkl and NMCs while it is not needed for takli and traditional (Krishan/Sudarshan) charkhas. Since traditional charkha is still the predominant means of spinning only 32.45 per cent spinners had undergone training in the entire sample (Table 12). In Almora, with the predominant use of takli less than 10 per cent spinners were trained but 62.12 per cent spinners were trained in Ballia district where NMC is more prevalent and 23.33 per cent were in Muzaffarnagar district with NMC making some inroads. Mostly training was given to the spinners for a period of three months through TRYSEM programme in each district. During the training period, each of

TABLE 12 : TRAINING AMONG THE SPINNERS

(Number of Spinners)

DISTRICT	TRAINED	UNTRAINED	TOTAL
Almora	6	56	62
Muzaffarnagar	14	46	60
Ballia	41	25	66
Total	61	127	188

the spinners was given Rs.150/- per month as stipend, besides the earning from the spinning work done by the trainees. After the completion of training, the NMCs were given to the spinners on the basis of full (to socially weaker spinners) or half subsidy under the IRD programme in Almora district. But this arrangement does not seem to have been provided in the other two districts, where spinners can use NMCs in worksheds. A few spinners in Ballia district have been provided with NMCs by Gandhi Ashram on an experimental basis.

Entire spinning work is organised through the centre of the institutions like Gandhi Ashram and KVIC. Generally, the spinner is given one kilogram material (cotton or wool) for a period of one week, but in some cases the quantity and period vary. At the beginning, when the spinner starts the spinning activity, he has to deposit the cost of the material in the centre, a passbook is issued to the spinner in which accounts of raw material taken, spun yarn returned and payments made are recorded. In the sample studied by us 83.51 per cent spinners were making transactions with the centres weekly, 12.23 per cent spinners had fortnightly and the rest once a month. The periodicity of collecting the material and depositing the product is generally associated with the distance from home of the spinner to the centre. The worksheds are located in the centres and the spinners of NMCs have to come daily to the centres, for spinning, but the provision is that payments and exchanges are made weekly.

During the investigation, it was found that certain problems tend to reduce productivity and earnings of spinners. Shortage of raw material was pointed out as the most important of these problems: over 86 per cent spinners reported experiencing shortage of raw material (Table 13). Spinners in Ballia suffered most on this account. The institutions admitted the existence of the problem and gave lack of transport facilities and of storage facilities as the reasons for their failure to ensure regular and adequate supply. Distance from

TABLE 13 : PROBLEM IN SPINNING WORK

Nature of Problem	Almora	Muzaffarnagar	Ballia	Total
Shortage of raw material	47 (75.81)	50 (83.33)	66 (100)	163 (86.70)
Uncertainty of supply of raw material	22 (35.48)	31 (51.67)	17 (25.76)	70 (37.23)
Late payment	26 (41.94)	30 (50.00)	19 (28.79)	75 (39.89)
Low wages	13 (20.97)	20 (33.33)	15 (27.73)	48 (25.53)
Lack of family cooperation	6 (9.68)	13 (21.67)	--	19 (10.11)
Negligence of Centres' employees	12 (19.35)	16 (26.67)	--	28 (14.89)
TOTAL	62(100)	60(100)	66(100)	188(100)

NOTE: FIGURES IN BRACKETS ARE PERCENTAGES TO SAMPLE.

residence to the centre and consequent loss of time in collecting the raw material and depositing the spun yarn was mentioned by spinners as another problem which gets accentuated once the supply of material is not ensured on every visit. Delayed payment of wages was another major problem faced by the spinners : about 40 per cent of the spinners complained of the late payments of wages. Inadequate care or deliberate harrasment by the workers of the centre particularly in weighing the spun material and numbering the counts. About 15 per cent of the spinners found the employees of the centre wanting in carefulness, proper behaviour and cooperation. Lack of time due to

domestic work and other responsibilities of households, and often lack of cooperation from the family are the other difficulties that the women spinners face.

Centres distributing raw material and collecting the spun yarn are expected to be located nearer the areas where there is a concentration of spinners. But in some cases centres are at a considerable distance from the villages of spinners. The centres are located at a considerable distance in Ballia district as compared to other districts (Table 14). The distance of collection centres was more than five kilometers for

TABLE 14 : DISTANCE OF COLLECTION CENTRES

D I S T A N C E	NUMBER OF SPINNERS			
	Almora	Muzaffarnagar	Ballia	Total
Upto 1 Km.	28	20	3	51
1 - 2 Kms.	29	27	4	60
2 - 3 Kms.	5	--	1	6
3 - 4 Kms.	-	--	1	1
4 - 5 Kms.	-	--	1	1
5 and above.	-	--	41	41
T O T A L :::	62	47	51	160

NOTE: 28 SPINNERS WORK IN WORKSHEDS.

62.12 per cent spinners in Ballia district while in Muzaffarnagar, the spinners had not to cover a distance of more than two kilometers and the spinners in Almora district had to cover upto three kilometers. Overall, the distance of collection centres was upto two kilometers for 69.37 per cent spinners. Generally, the transactions are made by the spinners

themselves but due to long distance, social taboos and lack of spare time from household work, women spinners are unable to visit the centres and other members of their families visit and deal with the centres on their behalf. About 35 per cent of the spinners visit the centres for this purpose themselves. These dealings were handled by women spinners themselves in 16 per cent cases in Ballia, 40 per cent in Almora and 49 per cent in Muzaffarnagar. Rest of the dealings were handled (Table 15) by the other members of the families. Husbands

TABLE 15: PERSONS VISITING AND DEALING WITH THE CENTRES

DISTRICT	Persons Visiting the Centres							Total
	Self	Hus- band	Fath- er	Son	Dau- ghter	Bro- ther	Moth- er	
Almora	25	19	4	12	2	-	-	62
Muzaffarnagar	23	9	2	4	4	-	5	47
Ballia	8	18	4	6	-	15	-	51
TOTAL	56	46	10	22	6	15	5	160

NOTE: 28 SPINNERS WORK IN WORKSHEDS.

performed this task most often, viz, in 28.75 cases. Husbands were followed by sons as carriers of material and yarn and receivers of wages on behalf of the women spinners. Sons performed these tasks in 14 per cent cases. The transactions, in other cases, were being made by brothers, mothers and daughters. On the whole, it was the male members of the family who undertook the task of dealing with the centre in most cases where the women spinners themselves could not handle it themselves.

Overall males were handling transactions with the centres in 58 per cent cases, women spinners themselves in 35 per cent and other female members of the family in seven per cent cases. This pattern is, of course, applicable to the spinners undertaking the spinning work in their homes. Those working with the workshed system come daily to the centres and handle the transactions themselves. As pointed out earlier there was no spinner working in the workshed in Almora sample, while their proportion was 22 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 23 per cent in Ballia.

Productivity in spinning work is higher in worksheds as compared to spinning at home. Yet, of the spinners working at home, 44 per cent were not willing to work in the worksheds. Those not willing to change to workshed system made 47 per cent in Almora, 51 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 32.29 per cent in Ballia (Table 16). A major reason pointed out by 86 per cent spinners for their unwillingness was the loss of domestic work. The family members of 28 per cent spinners did not allow them to work in worksheds. Old age and inconvenience in visiting workshed were among the other reasons for the spinners disinterested in workshed system of spinning.

TABLE 16 : SPINNERS WILLINGNESS TO WORK IN WORKSHEDS

DISTRICT	Total No. of spinners in sample	No. of spinners spinning at home	No. of spinners spinning at work shed	No. of spinners willing to work in work shed	No. of spinners not willing to work in work shed	Reasons for unwillingness to work in the workshoped(% of un-willing spinners)	Lack of time for other work	Family and social restrictions	Personally inconvenient.
Almora	62	62	---	33	29	100		28	32
Muzaffarnagar	60	47	13	23	24	100		42	13
Ballia	66	51	15	33	18	100		50	0
TOTAL	188	160	28	89	71	100		38	13

VI

WORK AND WAGES

Earnings from spinning are mainly a function of means of spinning in use on the one hand, and time devoted to spinning on the other. The period of spinning mostly depends upon the availability of spare time. Around 43 per cent of the spinners were devoting between five to eight hours a day to spinning. Another 26 per cent were engaged in spinning for less than three hours, and about nine per cent for more than eight hours a day. Due to heavy burden of productive and household work women in Almora district are able to give little time for spinning : 39 per cent spinners could devote less than two hours a day to spinning; and very few more than five hours a day. A considerable number of spinners were spinning more than three hours per day in Muzaffarnagar district and Ballia district. A large number of spinners have adopted spinning as a full-time occupation rather than a spare-time activity in Ballia district where 79 per cent spinners engaged in spinning for more than five hours a day.

The earnings from spinning are determined by the quantum of material spun; which is further determined by the mode of spinning used and time devoted to this work (Table 17). Monthly average earning of a spinner was Rs.32 in Almora as against Rs.111 in Ballia and Rs.84 in Muzaffarnagar. By means of spinning, the spinners using takli earned Rs.18 per month, and

TABLE 17 : QUANTITY OF MATERIAL SPUN, AND EARNINGS PER SPINNER, BY MEANS OF SPINNING

Means of Spinning												
DISTRICT	Takli	Traditi- onal Ch- arkha				N M C (at home)		N M C (workshed)		AVERAGE		
	Quan- tity- spun (Q)	Ear- nin- gs:: (E)	Q	E	Q	E	Q	E	Q	E		
Almora	1038	18	3932	49	--	-	19507	92	---	--	3572	32
Muzafar- nagar	--	--	6291	72	6000	120	-	-	12309	130	7575	84
Ballia	--	--	5459	85	5971	97	15857	169	15666	141	9045	111
AVERAGE	1038	18	5757	72	5973	98	17541	133	14107	136	6771	76

NOTE: QUANTITY SPUN(Q) IN GRAMS; EARNINGS(E) IN RUPEES, BOTH PER MONTH those using traditional charkha between Rs.49 in Almora to Rs.85 in Ballia. Those using Ambar charkha earned Rs.120 per month in Muzaffarnagar and Rs.97 in Ballia. The NMC yields the highest earnings, but there are differences between districts and also between the use of the NMC at home or in the workshed. The NMC are used in homes provided by Gandhi Ashram in Ballia district and under IRD programme in Almora district. In the former, earnings by own use of NMC are Rs.169 per month per spinner and in the latter Rs.92. In Ballia per worker monthly earnings were higher (Rs.169) while working at home than for work in the workshed(Rs.141). A spinner earned the higher using NMC in workshed in Ballia as compared to Muzaffarnagar(Rs.130). Cotton as well as wool is spun by the spinners of Muzaffarnagar but the income levels were different. The wool spinner earned more (Rs.104) as compared to cotton spinner (Rs.70).

Levels of earnings are directly related with the quantity of material spun. The per worker earnings from spinning were very low in Almora as compared to Muzaffarnagar and Ballia, for, the quantum of material spun per spinner per month was substantially lower in Almora (3572 grams) as compared to Muzaffarnagar (7575 grams) and Ballia (9045 grams). Eighty seven per cent of spinners spun less than 5000 grams of material per month, and 55 per cent less than 2000 grams per month in Almora. The corresponding proportion of spinners with less than 5000 grams of material spun per month were 18.33 per cent in Muzaffarnagar and 39 per cent in Ballia. No spinners in Ballia and Muzaffarnagar worked with less than 2000 grams of material per month.

Due to availability of better technological devices in spinning activity, a larger number of spinners used New Model charkhas in district Ballia as compared to other two districts. The NMCs were used by 33 per cent spinners in district Ballia where as in district Almora and Muzaffarnagar the NMCs were used by 9.67 per cent and 24 per cent spinners respectively. Consequently, the percentage of spinners who used traditional charkhas in district Ballia was considerably lower as compared to the other two districts. Similarly, a higher percentage (34%) of spinners used Ambar charkhas in district Ballia and this mode is also better in productivity as compared to Takli and Sudershan which were used by most of the spinners in district Almora and Muzaffarnagar. On the other

hand, the time devoted in spinning activity by the spinners was relatively higher in district Ballia which enabled higher level of earnings as a result of larger quantity of material spun. Spinning was undertaken in district Ballia as an economic proposition and a significant portion of their time was shared by spinning work. Similarly, the daily hours spent in spinning activity by the spinners in district Ballia were higher as compared to other two districts. A spinner on an average spent 6.40 hours in Ballia, 5.20 hours in Muzaffarnagar and only 2.51 hours in Almora. The intensity of work in spinning activity was higher among the spinners in district Ballia. Due to low level of per capita income as well as dearth of employment opportunities in other activities, the spinners in district Ballia devoted their time in spinning with a greater devotion without losing their time. As it has been already mentioned that the per capita annual income is found Rs.1250 in district Ballia, Rs.1348/- in Muzaffarnagar and Rs.1495 in Almora. Similarly, the number of people living below poverty line was larger (26%) in district Ballia as compared to Muzaffarnagar (18%) and Almora (20%). The organisational set-up of the agency has a direct relationship with the efficiency and productivity of the spinners. It is found that the performance of the agencies engaged in khadi work was relatively better in district Ballia.

Quantum of work, of course, varies with the means of spinning used as pointed out earlier. Takli which was used by most of

the spinners as a means of spinning in Almora, gave the lowest per worker yarn production while the NMCs recorded highest average production per worker from takli, 932 grams from traditional charkha and against 19507 grams from NMC in Almora. In the workshed, per worker monthly average production was 12308 grams in Muzaffarnagar and 15666 grams in Ballia district. Per day spinning hours of spinners in workshed were higher in Ballia as compared to Muzaffarnagar. The per worker average production using traditional charkhas was higher (6291 grams) in Muzaffarnagar as compared to Ballia (5459 grams) and Almora (3932 grams). The payment of wages is generally made at the time of delivery of spun material with the centre and collection of raw material for the next period. Therefore, the periodicity of payment of wage is same as that of collection of raw material as discussed earlier. About 83 per cent of the spinners received their wages on a weekly basis. About one-eighth of the spinners received their payments twice a month. It is seen that sometimes the centres fail to pay wages of the spinners according to schedule due to non-availability of ready funds with them. As observed earlier, some of the spinners from well-to-do families in Muzaffarnagar prefer to receive their wages in the form of khadi cloths rather than cash and non-availability of liquid funds does not pose a problem in their cases.

There is a system of compulsory deduction from the wages of spinners by the centres and the amount of deduction is paid back to the spinners either in cash or kind once in a year. The rates of deduction are different according to mode of spinning. It has been seen that in some cases the spinners wished to deduct more amount than the rates prescribed by khadi institutions. The survey data reveals that the rates of deduction varied from 5 to 10 per cent from the wages of spinners but in some centres there was no specific rate of deduction. The rate of deduction was 10 per cent for 70 per cent of spinners and 5 per cent for 18 per cent of spinners. In Ballia, deduction rates were higher than five per cent in all cases. The payment of deduction was made in kind to two-third of spinners. All the deductions were paid in cash to the spinners in Almora while kind payments were made to all the spinners in Muzaffarnagar and Ballia (Table 18).

The payments of deductions to all the spinners were made annually in Muzaffarnagar district and Ballia district. In Almora 39 per cent spinners were getting the amount of deduction annually and 42 per cent spinners were to be paid at the time of their finally leaving spinning activity; and the rest would get when they demand or when the centre decides. The system of deduction is not liked by over two-thirds (68%) of the spinners in Muzaffarnagar, by two-thirds in Ballia and

TABLE 18 : DEDUCTIONS FROM WAGES, REFUND, AND SPINNERS' VIEWS:

District	Amount of deductions from wages			Pattern of payment of deduction:		Spinners' Willingness for deductions	
	5%	10%	Unlimited	Cash	Kind	Yes	No
Almora	15	35	12	62	--	40	22
Muzaffar-nagar	15	45	--	--	60	19	41
Ballia	--	52	14	--	66	22	44
TOTAL	30	132	26	62	126	81	107

over one-third (35%) in Almora. Overall, more than 56 per cent spinners were against any kind of deduction from their wages.

The wage levels in spinning activities are generally lower than in other economic activities. Even then spinning is adopted by a large number of women because it suits the pattern of spare time available to them and also has the other attributes of an activity which suit women workers. There are women who do not want to do other kind of work for wages as it might require moving out of homes; but even for those who do not have such inhibitions, due to lack of employment opportunities in other spheres, spinning provides a readily available opportunity to earn. Not only are earnings low in spinning, a large number, 55 per cent, of spinners claim that remuneration that they receive are lower than what they should have got even within the given structure of fixed rates (Table 19). The major reasons for their getting less than their due wages, as pointed out by the spinners, were faulty and fraudulent weighing and measuring of their

TABLE 19 : SPINNERS' VIEWS ON REMUNERATION

		Almora	Muzaffar-nagar	Ballia	Total
Remuneration -	Adequate::	38	20	27	85
	Inadequate	24	40	39	103
<u>Reason for inadequacy of remuneration:</u>					
	biased in weighing	9	40	39	88
	biased in measuring	2	39	7	48
	partiality behaviour	-	34	2	36
	monopoly attitude	1	7	3	11
	low rates	8	-	24	32
	delayed payment	4	-	-	4
<u>Wage formula:</u>					
	Suitable::	15	-	25	40
	Unsuitable	47	60	41	148
<u>Reasons for Unsuitability</u>					
	Unclear:::	14	45	12	71
	Defective::	23	10	34	67
	Amenable to bias by centre	10	5	5	20

spun yarn by the employees of the centre. About 47 per cent of the sample spinners complained of the faulty weighing of yarn and 26 per cent feel that the counts of their yarn are not properly measured.

Spinners feel that even the rates, fixed according to weight and count of yarn, are not commensurate to their labour. About 79 per cent spinners were dissatisfied with the wage formula. In Almora no spinner was found satisfied with the formula, but in

Ballia 39 per cent and in Muzaffarnagar 24 per cent spinners considered the formula adequate. In any case, 48 per cent of the spinners did not understand the formula clearly and 45 per cent thought that the formula was not foolproof and can be manipulated if the employees of the centre were biased.

Widespread dissatisfaction with the basis of fixation, calculation and payment of wages is also reflected in the pattern of suggestions made by the respondents in respect of the arrangements of spinning work. About 81 per cent of them feel that the wages paid to them should be higher (Table 20).

TABLE 20 : SUGGESTIONS FROM SPINNERS REGARDING WAGES,
RAW MATERIAL, COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS AND
OTHER RELATED MATTERS

Suggestions	Almora	Muzaffar- nagar	Ballia	Total
Increase the wage rate	58	45	49	152
Easy availability of raw material	8	41	18	67
Better quality of raw material	8	--	--	8
Cash payment of wages	9	20	14	43
Timely payment of wages	2	22	18	42
No deduction from wages	-	20	8	28
Provision of door to door supply of raw material	-	35	15	50
Increase in the quantity of material	-	22	--	22

Other problems related with wage payment are payment in kind even when not wanted by the workers, delayed payment of wages, and deductions. Accordingly, 23 per cent spinners suggest that all wages should be paid in cash, a similar number also urge for prompt payment of wages, and 15 per cent would like that no deductions are made from their earnings. Problems relating to raw material are the next most important : as a result, 36 per cent spinners have suggested easier availability of raw material and 27 per cent would like supply of material at their homes. In Muzaffarnagar, 37 per cent spinners also want that the quantity given to them for spinning weekly/fortnightly should be increased.

Although the suggestions have similar pattern in the three areas studied, the spinners in Ballia and Muzaffarnagar want improvements of various kinds more often than those in Almora. In Almora, a suggestion for better quality of material is made by 13 per cent spinners, but none made a suggestion for abolition of deduction from wages, door to door supply of material or increase in quantity of material. May be they do not face problems in these regards, or then are less conscious than their counterparts in other districts regarding the need and possibility of improvement. In fact, the only suggestion made by most spinners in Almora is that of increase in wages; other suggestions regarding mode and time of

payment of wages, or raw material supply are made by a small proportion (less than 15%) of spinners each. But in Muzaffarnagar each of the various suggestions on those aspects are made by at least one-third of the spinners and in Ballia by about one-fourth of the spinners. The problems, pointed out earlier did not vary among the districts in that pattern: spinners from Muzaffarnagar mentioned various problems in largest frequency, but those in Almora were only marginally behind while spinners from Ballia mentioned problems, other than of raw material least often. It, therefore, seems that the suggestions made are not necessarily related with the degree to which problems are faced but also partly in accordance with the consciousness and aspirations that the spinners have in different areas.

VII

CONCLUSION

Decentralised textile-based activity, particularly spinning, has been a popular occupation of women in rural India, mostly on a part time basis. Availability of work and earning opportunity in spinning has raised the level of participation of women in productive activity, as it is found to be particularly suitable for women in the given socio-economic context. Non-availability of other avenues for earning or non-suitability of the available avenues, suggests that women engaged in spinning were unlikely to be able to participate in any other productive activity in the time devoted to spinning. This

activity, therefore, provides a net gain in employment and earnings of women. The state-sponsored programme of promoting and popularising khadi, under the aegis of Khadi and Village Industries Commission, has made significant contribution in raising women's participation in khadi work, particularly in spinning, by arranging supply of material and collection of yarn, which otherwise would have posed serious problems for individual spinners and prevented a large number of women undertaking spinning now from taking it up.

Participation in spinning has led to a distinct status as earners for the women spinners. On an average spinning, mostly undertaken as a spare time activity, contributes around 10 per cent of the income of the families of the women spinners. But, besides the quantum of earning, what is important is that this contribution is distinct and mostly in cash, as compared to the non-apportionable contribution the women workers make to the other household productive activities like agriculture, and animal husbandry. It is difficult to assess whether the participation and earnings from spinning led to an improvement in status of women in the family and society. But around two-thirds of them felt that it has improved their status in the family and a little less than half of them felt that their status in the society has also improved. Illiteracy and antiquated values about women's role, however, seem to come in the way of improvement in women's

status despite their important contribution in productive activity and household income. Since certain household chores and productive activities are considered to be exclusively women's work, their participation in spinning does not relieve them of the burden of these activities, it only increases the hours of work, as spinning is undertaken in addition to the activities women are in any case expected to perform.

Spinning as an activity for women is seen to have found general acceptability of the families. Where it has been undertaken by women of earlier generations also, there is no resistance against the new generation taking it up. But where women are undertaking it for the first time in the family, it has met with some resistance. Decision to take up spinning work has been that of the women spinners themselves in the large majority of cases; only in one-fourth of cases they were asked by other members of the family to go for spinning. Yet in each case permission was sought except in eight per cent cases where the woman concerned was herself the head of the household, and in all but eight per cent cases permission was readily granted. Yet about one-fourth of the women spinners reported that their family members feel that spinning conflicts with other essential household tasks that women are expected to perform; and in a few cases actual situation of conflicts also arose due to this feeling. Thus it looks that despite general acceptance and recognition of spinning work by women, in some cases the family

members of spinners, want them to take up spinning without any reduction in the time and effort for the household work.

Despite its generally being a spare time activity, a significant number of women undertake spinning as their main activity. A large number of them are unmarried young girls, mostly from relatively better off families, who take up spinning work as a matter of pass time and hobby, and not necessarily out of economic compulsions. But a few women have spinning as their main source of income and livelihood. Participation in spinning activity, therefore, does not show any distinct bias between different socio-economic group : women from landless as well as different landholding groups, from low income households as well as high income households undertake spinning to more or less similar extent, though their main motivation and importance of earnings from spinning in family income differ. Nevertheless, it is seen that unmarried girls in the 15-25 age group, married women living with parents, married women without children, and widows, have a relatively large proportion among spinners.

As most of the women are undertaking spinning at home and as a spare time activity, it is natural that they like to use simple, moveable, easily operable and economical equipment. Drop spindle (takli) is the cheapest and most convenient mode of spinning and used by most spinners in the hills, but its productivity is very low. New Model Charkha is most productive, but

it is somewhat complicated to operate, therefore requires training, and most households cannot afford to buy it as it is costly. At the moment this model is mostly operated in worksheds, and most women find it difficult to work in workshed. Thus besides takli it is the traditional or Ambar charkha which, despite its low productivity, is found to be "appropriate" by most spinners. Thus, there seem to be a conflict between the suitability and productivity of spinning technology for women, which remains unresolved.

Organisation of spinning work as set up by KVIC is found generally satisfactory by women spinners so far as it provides for the distribution of raw material among and collection of spun yarn from the spinners. It is, however, seen that due to the distance of the collection centre from their residence, combined with family restrictions on their movements out of home, a large majority of women spinners, are not able to visit the centre for the transactions, and this task is performed mostly by the male members of their families. This arrangement prevents the women spinners from knowing the procedures and organisation directly and, to that extent, their feeling of involvement in their work is reduced. They are reduced to the status of simply toilers without participation in the organisational process. Also it prevents them from getting any opportunity for exposure to environment out of homes and for any improvement in their awareness and knowledge about the society at large.

Even though most of them do not come into direct contact with the collection centres, they find quite a few problems with their functioning, as spinning workers. They do not get the quantity of material - cotton or wool - that they want and can spin in a week, which is the most prevalent periodicity for collection and delivery. Sometimes they do not get even the minimum prescribed quantity as the centre does not have adequate stock. The problem of distance of the centre and availability of raw material do not arise in the workshed systems, but as mentioned earlier, it is not convenient or permissible for most of the women spinners.

The largest number of spinners seem to have problem with the rate of remuneration, its calculation and payment. The remuneration formula, which takes into account weight and count of yarn, is found unsuitable both because the rates fixed are low and it is possible for the officials of the centre to err in weighing, counting and calculation, inadvertently or deliberately. It is also noted that payment of remuneration is often delayed due presumably to the non-availability of cash with the centre. And deductions are considered irksome by most spinners, more so when they are refunded in some cases at the discretion of the centre or are repaid in kind in terms of khadi cloth. Payment of wages or deposit in kind is resented by most spinners; as many as 38 per cent of the spinners

had to use khadi by compulsion as their remuneration was paid partly in khadi rather than cash. In view of ^{the fact} that most spinners and their family members in any case use khadi as it is found cheaper and durable by them, the compulsion involved in kind payment of remuneration seems redundant.

Spinning, being a spare time activity in most cases and undertaken mostly on the basis of low efficiency technique, the amount of spinning undertaken by spinners is quite low. On an average a women spinner uses 6.77 kg. of raw material per month, about 1 kg. is used by those working on takli, 6 kg. by those with traditional charkha and 14 kg. by those using NMC at home. Average wage on all the modes together works out to Rs.76 per month. Given the constraint of time with most spinners, it is possible to increase their work and earnings in spinning by appropriate improvements in technology. The most productive mode, NMC, has not yet found much popularity, as its appropriateness in social and economic terms does not seem yet proved.

On the whole, spinning work under the aegis of KVIC has increased the opportunities for variety in work and earnings for the rural women, and also led to an improvement in their economic and social status. It is significant to note that most women spinners have the freedom to keep and spend their earnings and even when other members of the family keep and spend

them, the spinners are consulted in most cases. But involvement and sense of participation of women spinners in the programme is rather lacking due both to the social context and the organisation of the programme. A large number of spinners have suggested door-to-door delivery and collection of material and yarn so that they can directly deal with the organisation responsible for the programme and understand the process better. Alternately, better dispersal of the collection centres seems desirable. Similarly, deductions delayed and kind payment and restrictions and irregularity of availability of material, are such problems that the organisation could easily solve so as to make the participation of women in the programme, more meaningful and effective.